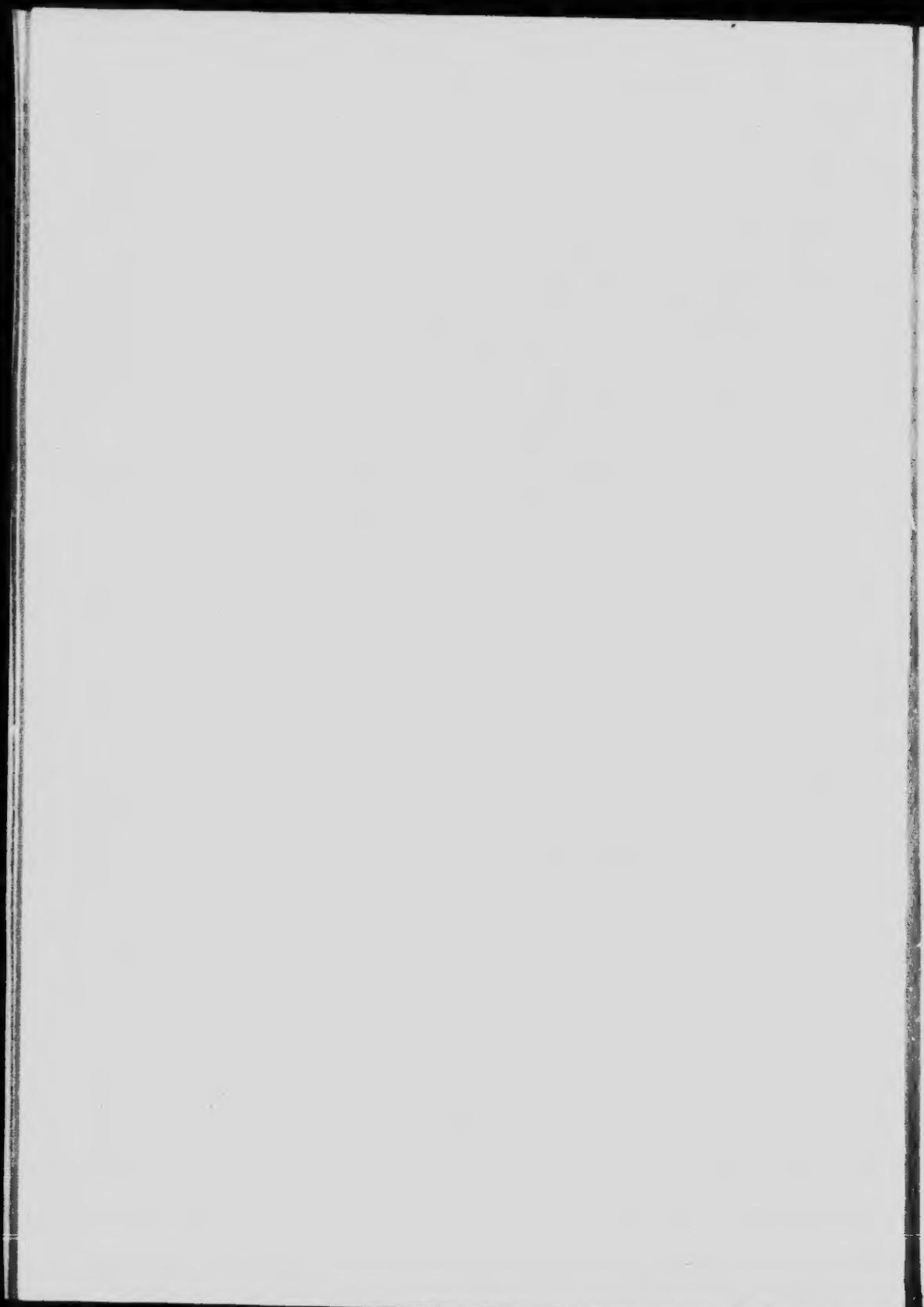


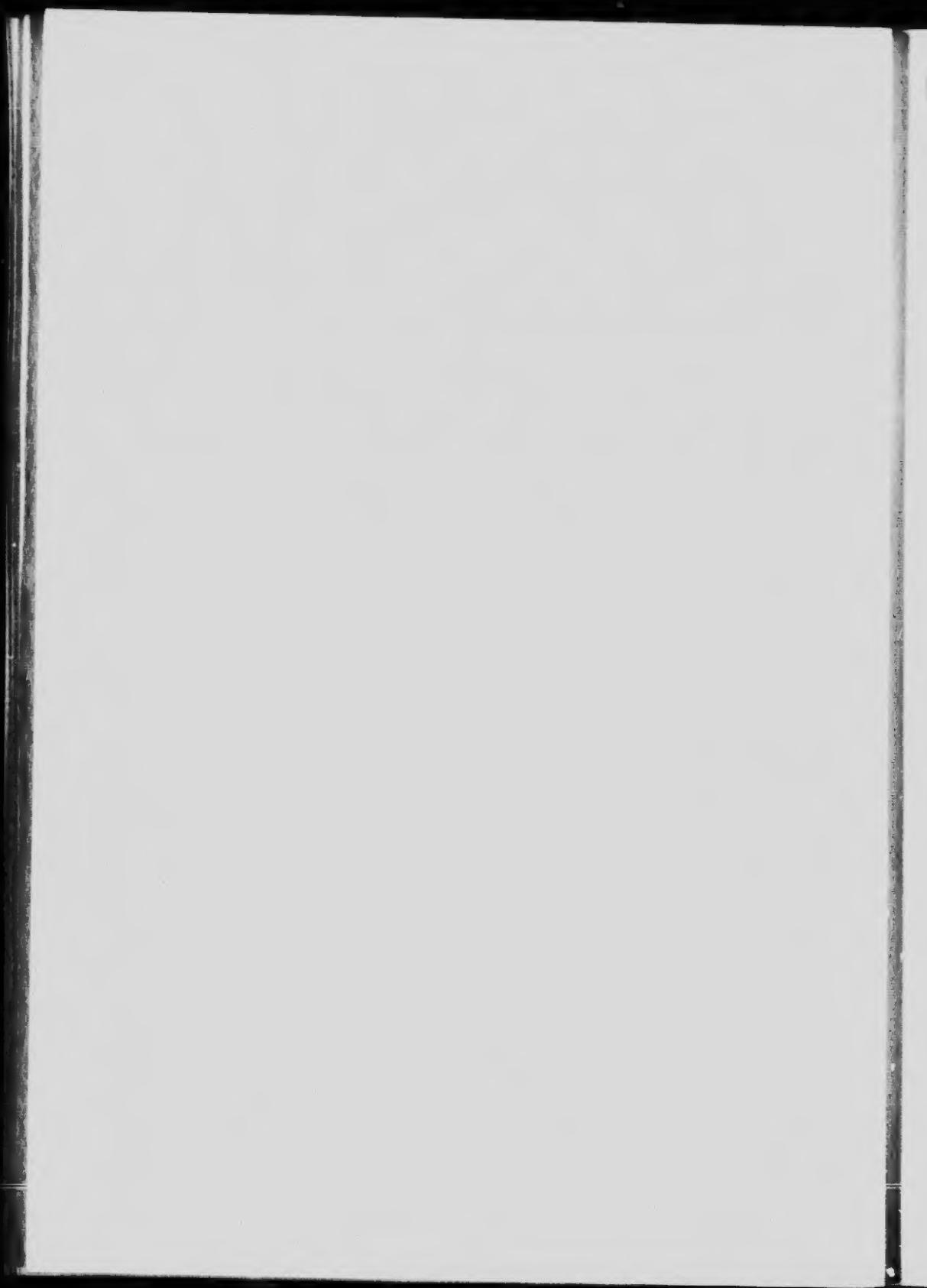
The Angel
and
The Star

Ralph Connor

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The Angel and The Star

A SERMON PREACHED IN ST. STEPHEN'S
CHRISTMAS, 1807

Ralph Connor

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Connor R.

To My Beloved People of St. Stephen's,
who so loyally bear with me
and pray for me
and work with me
in
The King's Service



THE ANGEL
AND
THE STAR



THE ANGEL



HE day's work was done in Bethlehem. The sound of hammer and of loom, the cries of hawkers and of traders, the noises of the bustling crowds that thronged the tortuous streets were still. With the sunset, rest had come to the workers—not to all. In the little house of the Chief Shepherd in charge of the sacrificial flocks there was a stir, for he was about to depart for his nightly watch on the plains below the city.

Of the royal line of David, he bore in his face and carried in his mien the marks of his noble blood. His wife, also of this royal line, waited upon her lord at his evening meal, pausing now and then to hush the feeble wail of the babe she carried with her to and fro. Upon her husband's face a heavy shadow lay, for his heart was hot and his spirit bitter within him. Long before, his independent carriage and proud spirit had drawn the persecuting wrath of Herod, for no one of noble blood was safe from the fierce suspicions and savage jealousy of that Idumean usurper. His only safety had been in submission, bitter to his soul; and ever and again the servile courtiers of that monstrous, blood-reeking tyrant found much pleasure and some profit in harrying still further the humbled man. By the cloud upon his face his gentle wife knew that some fresh outrage had been done that day, and with

wise and loving words she strove to lure his mind to the serene heights of faith and hope. She talked of the gathering of their tribe for the Roman taxing into their ancient royal city, and of the glories of their past. The shadow only deepened upon her husband's face. Well she knew his thought.

"Jehovah reigneth," she quoted.

"Verily the signs of His Kingdom are few," he replied bitterly.

"He shall judge His people with righteousness," again she quoted.

"Righteousness!" he cried, "There is none in this land any more. 'The wicked walk on every side' when vilest men are exalted."

"Hush," she said, gently closing the door.

"Righteousness!" he exclaimed bitterly again.

"Not so loud, I entreat thee. The Roman guard hath just gone by."

"The Roman? I fear him not. He is just at heart. The Roman lion fears not the strong, and seizes what he desires. But these jackals of Herod plunder and harry the weak and broken of the flock. To-day they made fresh demands and, remembering thee, I smote them not, but paid my toll, while they taunted me 'Where is thy God.' Lord Jehovah how long? Wilt Thou be angry forever? How long wilt Thou hear the bitter cry of Thy people? Pour out Thine indignation upon them. Let Thy burning anger take hold upon them. Let their habitation be desolate. Let them be blotted out of the book of the

living." His voice rose and fell in the terrible chant of the Hebrew poet-king of old.

"Why didst thou cease?" she chided gently. "Doth not the words follow 'For Jehovah heareth the poor. God will save Jerusalem and will build the cities of Zion.' And again, 'He shall judge the poor, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.' "

"Will He, indeed, break Herod and his might in pieces, with great Rome behind him?" he asked, rising to take his staff and cloak, for the nights were chill.

"Yea, verily, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. The Angel of the Covenant is mighty," she replied.

"Angel?" he questioned. "Priest Ezra says there are none, and I confess I never saw any."

A quick anger flashed in her face. "It is written, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of thy rulers,' but the Sadducee I believe not. Did not the Angel speak with Abraham our father, and with Jacob at Bethel, and with Moses the man of God at the Bush, and with Gideon, and with the holy prophets?"

"That is all far away from us to-day," he replied gloomily.

"But Jehovah is near us," she answered quickly. "Nay, do not yield to unbelief. See," holding up her babe, "he seems stronger, he smiles at thee. Jehovah keep him safe!"

"For what?" he asked bitterly, but he laid down the staff and took the babe. Reverently lifting his eyes

he invoked blessing, "Jehovah grant thee peace," and gave him to his mother. But the babe, to his father's joy, clung fast, till with gentle force the mother took it from his arms.

"Come to thy mother child. Thy father must go to his sheep, to ward off the fierce beasts and the fierce robbers. And indeed, I often fear for thee, my husband, till I cannot sleep."

"What! what!" said her husband, his gloomy mood passing, "What of thy faith now? What of thy God?"

"Ah yes, thou hast well said. 'He shall give His angels charge over thee.' I will not fear."

"Angels again!"

"Yes, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways,' and so to His angels I confide thee."

"In one angel at least, nay in two," kissing his babe again, "I confide."

"Go, haste. I shall watch thee down the hill. And His angels guard thee safe."

She watched till he turned from the street into the path that led far out on to the sloping hills lying dim and distant, then turned with a sigh to her little home, her sick babe in her arms.

"Surely the day of the Lord cannot long be delayed," she said to herself

Meantime her husband, striding down the highway that led out into the country, saw before him a group of travellers, with their beasts, noisily bargaining and

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chaffering for a lodging. In vain they pled. In vain being refused, they poured maledictions upon the keeper of the inn.

“What would ye, my brethren,” he protested, “Can I make what is not? My house is filled from roof to floor. The courtyard only is left, and the stable.”

“Thy courtyard! But it is better than the street,” they grumbled and poured in.

Two had stood apart from the rude crowd, a man and a woman, the man in sore distress.

“Brother,” he entreated, drawing near the innkeeper, “in the name of Jehovah in the name of our father David, I beseech thee hear me and grant us some quiet spot, not for myself but for the woman, who is as you see.”

The shepherd, noting the woman's face, turned quickly away, paused, arrested by its sweet dignity, touched with anxiety and fear of her coming anguish.

“Man, have I not said—” shouted the distracted innkeeper, but catching sight of that gentle face he stopped abruptly, “There is no place for wife and child of my own to lay their head. But,” glancing again at that pathetic figure of dignity and coming sorrow, “there is—” once more he hesitated, “the stable—and fresh fodder—at least it is quiet.”

Quickly the woman turned to her husband and whispered a word, and bending her head with unspeakable grace murmured, “The Lord give thee peace. The God of our father David bless thee,”

and moved toward the stable, followed by her husband.

The innkeeper stood silent with bared and bent head while she passed, awed by the dignity of that gentle face, and touched by her need.

"Now may the God of Abraham and Sarah grant thee mercy," he murmured, looking after them.

"Who are they?" asked the shepherd reverently for he too had uncovered his head as they passed.

"Nay," answered the innkeeper testily, "dost think I know every traveller from the north country? But I must go and make what comfort I can for them."

Long after the shepherd lay with his fellow watchers on the hillside, the vision of that face with its gentle dignity and its foreshadow of pain, kept coming to him. He would have gone home to his wife for her help, but he dared not leave his place. But the thought of the woman haunted him, the music of her voice in blessing still sounded in his ears, "Jehovah give thee peace." Was there anything in it? Again his old harassing doubts and his bitter thoughts came hard upon him, forbidding the sleep that had fallen upon his fellow watchers, while through his heart echoed the ancient taunt "Where is thy God?" How then of the Roman oppression, the degradation of the ancient Throne of David in the pagan Herod, the barrenness of the Pharisaic legalism, the worldly scepticism of the Sadducee?

Darker and stiller grew the night. He could hear the breathing of the sheep near him, the lonely cry

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of the jackal from the canyon. Gradually under the tranquil silence of the night his troubled heart grew quiet. The song of his great ancestor, himself a shepherd, came to him, "Jehovah is my shepherd I shall not want," and "He shall give His angels charge." He thought of his wife's faith. The angels might well enough be about her. The face of the woman in the street so near her sorrow came to him. In that face he found the same suggestion of the presence and peace of Jehovah. Through the great past of his people his mind travelled. The great men of his race were great only as they held to Jehovah. Yes, and even in the darkest days there had been those who had dared to believe in Jehovah and to wait for Him. He thought of Jacob at Bethlehem, Moses in the desert far south yonder with his flocks, of David hunted by his enemy and again by his own son, of Israel in Babylonian exile, yet Jehovah had never quite forsaken, but in the darkest hour the Angel of the Covenant had comforted them. Jehovah had redeemed His people. Might it not be again? Never had darker days fallen for the people of God, their land under a foreign yoke, their people torn by religious dissensions, their religious leaders fiercely fighting each other for place and power or consumed with lust for gold. He bowed his face between his knees and cried out into the night "Oh Lord how long? Wilt Thou be angry forever? Hast Thou forgotten to be gracious?"

As if in answer, a great calm fell upon him. A

sudden faith subdued his soul into stillness. "I will remember the years of the most High. I will remember thy wonders of old." Jehovah seemed very near.

He rose and stood with his face wrapped in his mantle. His very soul seemed to be listening for the footfalls of God. All Nature seemed to be aware of that Great Presence. About him he fancied he could hear the breathing of the hills, the heart-beat of the night, the music of the stars. Music? Hark! He threw back his mantle and lifted up his face to the stars. His soul was bathed in a flood of ineffable joy. What was it? Music seemed to be raining from the stars in an exquisite faintness of melody. From beyond the stars, so far and fine it seemed. He listened, his soul and being tense in a quivering agony to hear. Yes, there again and fuller came the sounds, still from beyond the stars. But the very stars seemed nearer, the heavens above had bent closer to the hills as if to take them into their embrace. Again and yet again and ever clearer that falling shower of song filled the air about him and nearer and nearer came the stars irradiating the night.

The sleeping watchers woke, startled, rose, stood voiceless and terror-stricken. And now from the parted curtains of heaven a light began to glow brighter than the stars, making a shining pathway to earth and spreading over all the sky till it filled the night with glory; and down this quivering pathway myriads of shining ones streamed till they filled the

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earth and the spaces between earth and sky, and still they thronged in the far vanishing spaces of the opened sky. Ravishing music smote in soft waves upon the ears of the Shepherd gazing into this cloud of glory, filling his soul with a joy fearful and unspeakable. From every side seemed to come those wondrous harmonies, not from the Heavenly choirs alone but from the earth, the trees, the hills, yes, from the very blades of grass. Suddenly, out from the throbbing music a voice broke clear and strong,

"Fear not," it said, and the Shepherd's heart grew quiet, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

At that word there burst from Heaven a mighty chorus:

"Glory to God, in the highest
"On earth peace
"Good will to men."

Over and over again pealed forth the mighty chorus in antiphonal refrain. Earth from its central depths, from its hills and valleys, from its rocks and trees, answering heaven's celestial choirs. Prone upon their faces fell the Shepherd and his comrades, faint with ecstasy of delight. When they awoke, they said one to the other "What is this?" and one said "Is it a vision?"

"It is a dream," answered another. "It is but a dream."

Then spake the Chief Shepherd, "Nay, verily, it is

no dream, but Jehovah hath visited His people. Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

* * *

Already the day was dawning. Through the break in the eastern hills a silver light could be seen gleaming upon the Sea of Judgment far away, upon the northern Judean hills a faint flush from the rising sun and over city and plain the new glory of a dawning day. But all unheeding the Shepherd hastened homeward in a trance of ecstatic joy and wonder. The great tidings still sounded in his soul. The Messiah, Israel's Messiah had come at length, after so many ages and generations of passionate yearning and prayer, God had visited His people. And oh wonder of wonders! As a babel! A babel! He thought of his own feeble babe with new tenderness and new reverence, and of the mother that gave him birth. And in a manger! A manger for the Messiah! Why not in a palace? Ah, what palace? Not the gorgeous palace where the monstrous Herod luxuriated in his hideous enfamies. After all, a stable was best! He needed no trappings of royalty that earth could give. He brought His glory with Him. A babel and in a manger! Again he hastened his steps towards his own door. As he drew near a sound from within smote his heart with the chill of the grave. It was the wail for the dead. Like the stab of a sword the contrast pierced his heart. Yonder—joy, peace, life;

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here—grief, agony, death. He paused, turned and looked back upon the plain behind where the vision had fallen. Once more he saw the open heaven, still he could hear the ravishing song, "Peace, goodwill to men." He was strangely comforted. Earth, its sorrows and its joys seemed small to him who had been gazing into Heaven's glory and listening to Heaven's music and welcoming Heaven's King.

He passed into his home. At his coming the wailing only took a shriller note. With outstretched arms his wife came to him, dreading his agony, fearing for his life, praying for his submission."

With a single word he silenced the mourners.

"Peace, He is come." Amazed they gazed upon him. Fearful his wife drew near. Had madness seized him?

"Fear not, but rejoice, the Messiah is come," he said, his face filled with a wondering exultation and joy, "Death hath no longer power over Life. From Heaven the Prince of Life is come. And with Jehovah are the living forevermore."

And, standing there, to their astonished ears he told the wondrous story. A babel a manger! Speechless, afraid and unbelieving, the mourners stole from the house, leaving the two with their dead alone.

Timidly she touched his arm as he stood wrapped in silence. "Tell me, my lord, can it be true? How can it be?"

"True, dear one? Yea, verily, but how I know

not. What we heard and saw that I have told you, and yonder in the stable lies the babe."

The babe! Alive in its mother's arms! Her arms were empty. Quickly her husband gathered her to his heart.

"Dear one, I cannot weep to-day because of the great joy that has come. And even though death has touched our babe, death's victory is gone. They live, they . . . whom God hath loved. A babe's hand hath opened to me the gates of life. Listen, dear heart," and once more he told the story of the angel's visit, of the glory and the song, while she wondered till her pain grew less though tears still fell upon the little sleeping face. "And in the stable we found the babe and the mother—and in sore need."

A wise word it was.

"Ah," her woman's heart awoke, "May we go to her?" she asked.

"Come," he said.

"Wait for me," she said softly. From a closet in the wall she took the little garments she had made with tender hopes but a few months ago, her tears falling fast the while, and wrapping them up with some woman's robing she went forth.

"Guard the house," said her husband to the lingering and pitying mourners, "But wail not for the dead to-day."

And so through the still silent streets they went.

At the stable door they found a man.

"May she enter? She has lost her babe."

Quickly the kind face, radiant with light and love,
shadowed for an instant but cleared again.

"Jehovah give thee peace," he said, "Weep no
more for He is come. Enter."

An hour passed while the Shepherd waited, rever-
ent as at the court of the Most Holy Place. Then
came forth his wife and put her hand in his.

"Is it well?" he asked simply.

"It is well," she replied. And he needed no more
for Jehovah's peace lay like a light upon her face.

And so they passed back to their home with the
angel's song chanting itself through their hearts,
'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men.'

For where the Christ comes death hath no more
dominion for ever.



THE STAR



HE city of Jerusalem was troubled, was deeply troubled. Through its crowded streets had run a rumor that had kindled to flame the national Messianic hopes. A distinguished embassy from a far East land had come two nights ago, upon a strange quest. They had come seeking a King. At first men had laughed, but the grave majesty of the strangers, and the costly trappings of their caravan had changed the laughter to serious attention, and before the first night had gone, the streets and markets, the bazaars and wineshops were thrilling with the news. From the street to the Palace the rumor had run, and Herod himself, at first scornful, had deigned to summon the travellers to his presence. To-day at early dawn a strange thing had happened. The Great Council had been called by the King. That Idumean usurper, uncertain of his throne, hated by his people, despised by the noble families as an upstart, loathed by the priests as an apostate, trembled at every breath of Messianic enthusiasm, at every suggestion of a rival. He had shown his fear by summoning the Great Council. This whole day had they been in session. Jerusalem was well nigh mad with anxiety.

The appearance of a Messianic Leader, the sounding of one clear Messianic cry through these streets and Jerusalem would run with blood. No wonder Jerusalem was troubled. What would the next hour

bring? In tense fear they waited. What would come forth from that fortress Palace?

Night was falling, when from the gorgeous Palace gates came forth the Embassy from the East, travel-worn but stately, and following them the Council. In a moment from lip to lip ran the word, that nothing need be feared. And all Jerusalem, the light-hearted, gay, fiercely religious, cosmopolitan city, relaxed itself in scornful laughter at its recent panic. What fools they had been! A few foolish astrologers had seen a star in the East and had guessed a King was to be born. What accursed folly was this? But what could you expect of these Gentile dogs, and worshippers of idols?

And now they were gone seeking their King in Bethlehem! In Bethlehem! as if a King could there be born and Jerusalem and its wise and learned Scribes be unaware. And Jerusalem turned to its bargaining and sacrificing, its praying and its wine drinking much relieved.

Meantime that strange caravan had reached the terraced hills of Bethlehem. No need of guide, for once free of the city steadily burned before them a wondrous star.

Bethlehem was puzzled. Whence came these strange men? And who was that majestic figure in command? The rabble gathered about them. At the Inn they paused.

Their leader of kingly carriage and of patriarchal mien gave command. The beasts were unburdened,

and from the load one hamper was selected and brought near.

The innkeeper with obsequious hospitality offered shelter and refreshment. But the little company drew together and talked.

"How shall we make approach?" said one. "Who will bring us to Him?"

"Can we find one to present us to the King?" asked their leader of the innkeeper in the Hebrew tongue.

"The King?" said the innkeeper. "What King?"

"The King of the Jews."

"Nay, laughed the innkeeper scornfully, he lives not in so humble a place as Bethlehem, though yonder is a palace he has built. In Jerusalem you will find the King of the Jews, not here."

"Nay friend," the leader answered with grave dignity, "He is here, born, and yonder is His star."

"His star!" cried the innkeeper, "Now Jehovah defend us. Thou art mad. Whence art ye?"

"From the rising sun. Many weeks have we travelled seeking this King, for we saw the rising of His star in the East long months ago."

"His star? Are ye then of those who follow such accursed vanities and worship the abominations of the heathen? If so, there is no place for ye in my inn."

"Nay, we worship God," reverently replied the stranger with unruffled calm, "and would fain to do homage to His messenger, the King of the Jews, whose star we have followed from Jerusalem to this place."

"King of the Jews?" impatiently replied the inn-keeper, "Here shepherd," he called to the Chief Shepherd of the sacrificial flock who was passing to his nightly watch, "thou art skilled in these matters. What means this folly of the stars?"

The Shepherd turned to the Man of the East and gravely saluted him.

"Jehovah give thee peace. What wouldest thou?"

"We come seeking the King of the Jews, for in a land far from this we saw, many months ago, the rising of His star, and we have come to do him homage. But no man can we find who can give us guiding to his presence, not even Herod."

"Herod!" exclaimed the Shepherd scornfully, "Sought ye a King from that usurper?"

"Hush," said the innkeeper, glancing about upon the crowd, "Thou art mad to speak thus in the street."

"But," continued the Man of the East, "His Council directed us to Bethlehem, saying it was there the King was to be born."

"Born!" said the Shepherd quickly.

"Yea, and as we left the city His star appeared again, and lo! there it stands over that house before us. But we have none to bring us fittingly to Him."

The Shepherd stood silent as in a great maze, looking at the luminous star hung low over the house. "Truly this is wonderful," he said slowly, "for in

that house abides a Babe with its mother at whose birth strange things came to pass. But how came ye to hear?"

"Yonder is His star," calmly said the Man from the East.

"His star! what has he to do with stars?"

"Ay, verily and so said I," interrupted the innkeeper "These be cursed and unclean worshippers of the host of heaven."

"Nay, friend, we worship God and seek His anointed, the King of the Jews. Knowest thou this mother and this Babe?" he said to the Shepherd.

"I know the Babe and the mother; come," and he led them to the house where the young Child was and departed to his nightly watch deeply musing. An hour later the fretful voice of the innkeeper roused him.

"Hither Shepherd, and relieve me of this mad star-gazer, for he would take no rest nor give me any till I had brought him to thee."

"Be at peace, friend," said the Man of the East, placing a piece of gold in his hand. "Now go."

The tone and gesture of command struck the inn-keeper dumb, and murmuring a word of thanks, he hastily retired, leaving the two upon the starlit hillside together.

"Listen, my brother," said the Man from the East, "for I would speak with thee, and I cannot rest till I know what my heart craves." He paused, then said abruptly, "Tell me of the Babe; of its birth."

The Shepherd hesitated. "Why should I tell thee? thou art not of Israel. For in my heart I believe that this Babe is Israel's Messiah. Thou hast no part in Him."

"I will answer thee," replied the Man from the East. For two reasons shouldst thou tell me. Need I remind thee of thy law concerning the stranger within thy gates?" The Shepherd made a quick gesture of assent. "And if this Babe be indeed thy Messiah, need I remind thee of thy sacred writings which I have long studied: 'In Him shall the Gentiles trust,' and again, 'They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him.' If He be thy Messiah, then to-night is this Scripture fulfilled."

The Shepherd pondered. "Surely thou art no worshipper of false gods."

"Nay; I worship God," simply interposed the Man of the East.

"And more," continued the Shepherd, as if to himself, "the song said 'Good will to men.'"

"Tell me," entreated the stranger, his proud face softened by pain to humility, "for my heart is heavy from long years of agony."

But the age-long Jewish hate and jealous scorn of the Gentile held the Shepherd silent. To speak of Israel's Messiah to this alien and worshipper of stars, to him seemed sacrilige.

"Let me tell thee my story," said the Man of the East, "perhaps then thy hard heart shall melt." And to the shuddering ears of the Shepherd, he told a tale

of sin and lust and blood and treachery so terrible that it seemed to defile the very night.

"Then when I had drunk the dregs, my heart within me woke and cried for vengeance till I grew mad with desperate remorse. In vain I offered sacrifices upon the altars of the gods; in vain I poured forth treasure at the bidding of their priests. Deeply I studied, many lands I travelled seeking peace, but ever that cry of vengeance night and day echoed through the spaces of my soul till life became one long agony. The mysteries of our religion I mastered, the wisdom of the heavens I searched but found no help. At length to the wisest and the best of the priesthood of our land I went, an old man who lived remote from the world's fevers and ambitions, its joys and griefs. I told him my story. Swift was his answer: 'What thou lovest best, offer that to God and thou shalt find peace.' Like a sword in my bones was that word, for I had but one son, a beautiful youth. I turned away from him with my sin and my agony upon me. Then I remembered thy Abraham, and, for the sin of my soul, I offered the fruit of my body. Ah! My son! My son! From that high altar I came down cursing the gods of my people, and determined that I should seek no longer peace in life but death. That night, as I swept the heavens in my study of the mysteries, my eye caught the rising of a star of wondrous light and beauty. As if from Heaven a voice cried "Follow where I lead," and hope sprang up in my heart. I knew that a King was somewhere

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to be born who might have help for me. But where? All books I studied in the light of my knowledge of the stars, till in thy sacred books I read thus of thy coming King. 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.' And again, 'From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name and a peace offering, for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith Jehovah of hosts.' I obeyed the leading of the Star, and following, we have found Him. And now we have done our homage and offered our gifts. But still my heart's anguish is unpeased. The King has come truly whose Kingdom shall rule over all Kingdoms. But what of my sin?"

The Shepherd was deeply moved at the marvelous and terrible story.

"Said she naught of thy sin?" he asked.

"Nay we spoke little. In a King's presence we are silent. But if thou hast aught to tell, send me not back unhelped, for my sin is more than I can bear." The agony in his face touched the Shepherd's heart. He forgot his Jewish prejudice. "Listen," he said, and told the story of the angels and the song.

With eager face the stranger listened, deeply anxious, deeply perplexed. When the tale was done there was long silence, then the Man of the East spoke. "Goodwill to men! a Savior! Good! But Angels! I know naught of them!"

"Nor I of stars."

A light broke upon the swarthy face of the Man of the East. "Oh," he cried aloud, "But thee an Angel and me a Star led to the King. Praised be God!"

He took the Shepherd's hand. "The Lord thy God bless thee," he said. "In God there is hope. I shall try to be content."

"Jehovah give thee peace," replied the Shepherd. Then they parted.

"Stay," said the Shepherd. The stranger turned. "Spoke the mother the name of the Babe?"

"Yea. It is Jeshua."

"Knowest thou how it was given?"

"Nay."

"An Angel said, 'He should save His people from their sins.'"

The dark faced man drew near. "Tell me again," he entreated with trembling lips. "What said the Angel?"

"Thou shalt call his name Jeshua, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Then broke the stranger's proud reserve. The fountain of his tears was broken up. He turned toward the Star, and prostrating himself, he worshipped. Then with reverent grace he kissed the Shepherd, weeping, and went his way.

"Is it peace?" spake the Shepherd after him.

"It is peace!" came back from the star-lit darkness, and gazing at the Star the Shepherd wondered and bowed his head and worshipped.

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